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ABSTRACT

This report is a descriptive analysis of the migrant education Even Start Literacy Program and of families served in 1995-96. The 9 migrant Even Start projects funded in 1995-96 are described and compared to 563 reporting projects nationwide (out of 576 total). Nine state educational agencies received grants to help parents of currently migratory children become full partners in their children's education, assist these children in reaching their potential as learners, and provide literacy training to parents. Migrant projects averaged 103 enrolled families and 63 participating families, and provided early childhood education, parenting education, adult basic education, GED preparation, and English as a second language. Families averaged 6.2 members, with at least 1 child aged 0-7 (as required); 55 percent of families had annual incomes below $9,000; 71 percent did not speak English at home; and 87 percent of parents lacked a high school diploma or GED. Chapter 1 introduces the migrant Even Start Program. Chapter 2 describes project characteristics: funding, number of families served, rural/urban location, availability of nonproject services, staffing, staff qualifications, inservice training, agency collaboration, needs for support services, barriers to implementation, project needs for technical assistance, recruitment strategies, and content and intensity of services. Chapter 3 describes participant characteristics: family structure, size, ethnicity, economic status, and length of U.S. residence; parents' education, English language proficiency, and employment status; and nonproject services received. Chapter 4 outlines participation rates by parents and children in various services, prevalence of special needs children, retention rates, and parent educational and employment status at year end. Contains 48 data tables. (Author/SV)

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National Evaluation of
The Even Start Family Literacy Program

Special Analysis of
Migrant Education Even Start Projects

ED 417 921

1998

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Even Start Family Literacy Program addresses the basic educational needs of parents and children of low-income families by providing a unified program of (1) adult education and literacy programs for parents; (2) early childhood education for their children; and (3) assistance for parents to effectively promote their children's educational development. All Even Start projects are expected to provide services in each of three core areas: adult education and literacy; early childhood education; and parenting education. Projects provide some services directly and also build on community resources by collaborating with other service providers.

The Even Start law requires the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to conduct a national evaluation of Even Start to monitor and document the development of the program. Even Start encompasses state-administered projects as well as federally-administered projects that serve migrant, tribal, and outlying area populations.

The current national evaluation, covering program years 1994 through 1997, addresses these questions:

- Who is served by the program and what services do they receive? Is the program reaching the appropriate target population?
- How is the federal funding spent on the program? How are Even Start services implemented?
- How well does the Even Start basic model work? What educational and developmental gains are achieved by program participants?
- What are the characteristics of effective practices and programs?

This report presents the results of special analyses of data collected from the Migrant Education Even Start (MEES) projects for program year 1995-96. The purpose of this report is to provide a profile of the MEES Program that can be used by local projects, state and federal administrators, legislators, and policy-makers for program improvement and policy development.

MIGRANT EDUCATION EVEN START PROGRAM

Authorized under Section 1202(a)(1)(A) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended, the MEES Program made 1995-96 grants to state educational agencies (SEAs) to provide family-centered education programs to help the parents of migratory children become full partners in the education of their children; to assist currently migratory children in reaching their full potential as learners; and to provide literacy training to the parents.

Funds for the MEES Program come from a 5 percent set-aside from the overall Even Start allocation for projects serving Indian tribes, outlying areas, and migrant agricultural families.[1]

While similar to the basic Even Start projects in that they provide participating families with an integrated program of early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education, MEES projects are unique in that they:

- Serve a highly mobile population whose home base might not be where the project is located; and
- Provide services on an interstate and intrastate basis, ensuring coordination and cooperation between states (or areas of a state) in which migratory children and parents live during the year.

MEES projects face many challenges in delivering family literacy services to migratory populations. In many MEES projects, families participate only during certain months, returning after several months of absence. While they are in projects' services areas, many MEES parents work long days and therefore have little time to attend parenting and adult education classes. This requires many projects to provide intensive services a few evenings a week. In an attempt to provide year-round services, a few projects have implemented services in several states. These projects track and serve families as they migrate to each location. English is a second language for many parents in MEES. According to project staff, these parents are highly committed to learning English, in spite of their long and demanding work schedules. These parents also are committed to their children receiving early childhood education. The generally high level of commitment by the MEES families seems to be shared by project staff as well in their efforts to accommodate services to migrant families' needs.

THE 1995-96 NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

In March 1994, ED awarded a contract for the second four-year evaluation of the Even Start Program. The major component of the contract is the development and implementation of the Even Start Information System (ESIS). The ESIS stores the data collected from all Even Start projects and provides ongoing descriptive information across all Even Start projects, including: information about the participating families; types of projects funded; services that they provide; collaborative efforts these projects have undertaken; and obstacles in program implementation.

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[1] The Even Start Program was most recently reauthorized by the Improving America's School Act, which took effect in July 1995. The law provides a 5 percent set aside to be shared between Even Start projects for migrant agricultural families, the outlying areas, and Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

A total of 576 Even Start projects, including 9 MEES projects, were funded in 1995-96. Overall, 98 percent of Even Start projects (563 projects) returned ESIS data by the final due date. All of the 9 MEES projects funded in 1995-96 returned at least some evaluation data by the final due date (Exhibit 1.1).

Exhibit 1.1: Number (Percent) of Projects That Submitted 1995-96 Even Start National Evaluation Data

Type of Project	Number (and Percent) of Projects Reporting	Number of Projects Operating in 1995-96
State-administered Even Start projects	546 (98%)	558
Migrant Education Even Start projects	9 (100%)	9
Tribal Even Start projects	8 (89%)	9
Total	**563 (98%)**	**576**

SPECIAL ANALYSES OF MIGRANT EDUCATION EVEN START PROJECTS DATA

This report consists of special analyses of 1995-96 ESIS data submitted by 9 MEES projects, all of which were in at least their second year of funding.[2] As shown in Exhibit 1.1, the projects represent a small portion of the entire Even Start community. Since 100 percent of the MEES projects submitted evaluation data, the analysis results presented in this report describe the entire MEES program for the 1995-96 program year.

Readers should keep in mind that project-level and project site-level data are based on an extremely small number of records, and data submitted by these projects were incomplete to varying degrees. There are substantial variations in data across the 9 projects, and the "averages" may not describe accurately many of the individual projects. For the family-level analyses, there was a sufficient number of records to capture general profiles of MEES participants across all projects (Exhibit 1.2).

[2] Detailed descriptions of three MEES projects based on case studies conducted in 1994 are reported in *National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program: Report on Migrant Even Start Projects* (Levin, M., Gamse, B., Swartz, J., Tao, F., & Tarr, H., U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service, 1997). In addition, the first *Special Analysis of Migrant Education Even Start Data* was released by the U.S. Department of Education in 1997.

Exhibit 1.2: Number of Project and Participant Records Collected from Nine MEES Projects for the 1995-96 Even Start National Evaluation

ESIS Forms	Number of Records
Form A: Preliminary project information	9 Projects
Form B: Project description	9 Projects
Form C-Family: Family characteristics at intake	558 Families
Form C-Adult: Parent characteristics at intake	799 Parents
Form C-Child: Child characteristics at intake	845 Children
Form D-Family: Family participation outcomes	563 Families
Form D-Adult: Parent participation outcomes	855 Parents
Form D-Child: Child participation outcomes	936 Children

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

Chapter 2: Characteristics of Migrant Education Even Start Projects presents descriptions of migrant projects, including information on funding, staffing, inservice training, support services, barriers to program implementation, areas in need of technical assistance, and educational services provided.

Chapter 3: Characteristics of Migrant Education Even Start Families describes the demographic backgrounds of MEES families, parents, and children.

Chapter 4: Participation Rates of Migrant Education Even Start Families presents the extent of participation in educational activities by MEES parents and children and the rates of retention and program completion.

This report presents analysis results in tables accompanied by a brief narrative to assist readers in interpreting the results. The results for the Migrant Education projects are compared with results for all Even Start projects where appropriate.

CHAPTER 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANT EDUCATION EVEN START PROJECTS

This section presents information about MEES projects. The current national evaluation collects project-related data on two levels. Data concerning project structure, organization, and management are collected for each project as a unit. That is, each project provides information describing the project as a whole. However, detailed descriptions of services offered to participants are reported by project sites.

In the context of this evaluation, the term "site" does not refer to a physical or geographical location where a project's services are provided. Instead, the term refers to **service delivery designs and approaches**. Some projects use two or more distinctly different approaches (e.g., services designed for teen parents enrolled at a high school and a different set of services designed for older parents operated through collaboration with a community college and a Head Start program). Projects were instructed to report separate site-level information on multiple sites/designs **if they use more than one service delivery approach.**

Among the 9 MEES projects, one project reported data for four sites; eight projects reported one site each. Results of analyses based on project sites are noted as such in the exhibits and in the text of this report.

PROJECT FUNDING

Federal MEES grants represent the primary funding source for the MEES projects. In addition, projects are required to obtain a specified portion of their budgets from state and local sources. The portion of the total budget supported by Even Start funds must decrease by 10 percent each year, meaning that the non-Even Start ("local") matching funds must increase correspondingly and constitute at least 40 percent of annual operating budget by year four. Projects that receive a subsequent grant or grants must obtain at least 50 percent of their budget from local sources in all years of these grants.

As shown in Exhibit 2.1, the average federal funding for state-operated MEES projects for the 1995-96 program year was $208,044, compared to an average of $163,712 for all Even Start projects. The MEES funding was $44,332 per project more than the national Even Start average.[3]

[3] The budget and cost information obtained from Even Start projects for the national evaluation must be interpreted with caution. In particular, the amounts of local share may be underreported in many cases due to omissions of in-kind contributions.

Exhibit 2.1: Levels of Funding for MEES Projects (1995-96)

	1995-96 MEES Grant	1995-96 Local Contributions	1995-96 Total Resources
Average per project	$208,044	$131,530	$248,407
Amounts received by the top 25% of the projects	$263,980 or more	$173,015 or more	$317,961 or more
Total projects reporting	8	8	9

Note: Nine projects reported the total resources data; 8 projects reported their MEES grants and matching share amounts. Thus, the average MEES and matching shares do not add to the average Total Resources.

The average amount of matching funds contributed by state-operated MEES projects was $131,530—$22,812 per project more than the average for all Even Start projects ($108,718). Thus, the total resources—federal funding and local contributions combined—were $248,407 per MEES project, $3,134 more than the national Even Start average of $245,273.

NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED

The high mobility of MEES families makes it difficult for MEES projects to estimate the number of families served during a year, as families may participate for only a short while before moving. This is reflected in a sizable difference between the number of families MEES projects reported serving and the number of families for whom MEES projects submitted participation data in 1995-96.

Eight MEES projects reported the number of families they served in the 1995-96 program year. Based on these data, each MEES project, on average, served 103 families. (The range was 23 to 221.) This average was substantially greater than the average of 58 families per project based on data from all Even Start projects.

Data reported by the 8 MEES projects would indicate that approximately 930 families were served in the entire MEES Program during 1995-96. However, recall that Exhibit 1.2 reflects participation data on a much smaller number of participants: 563 families, 855 parents, and 936 children. If we use the number of families for whom we received participation data, rather than the number of families projects reported serving, the average number per MEES project is approximately 63 families. This is much closer to the national average of 58 families per project for 1995-96.

The apparent differences between the number of families projects reported serving and the number for whom participation data were submitted reflect a scenario that is familiar to MEES projects. Migrant agricultural families may enroll in Even Start upon arrival at the new migratory site, then, because of their work, leave the area after a only a few months. In such cases, projects may not report records of participation.

ANNUAL FUNDS PER FAMILY

We computed per family project budget using the number of families that projects reported serving (Exhibit 2.2, 103 families per project), consistent with the approach used to compute the per family cost for all Even Start projects.

Based on data reported by 8 projects, the average annual budget per family for MEES projects in 1995-96 was $2,707, combining funds from all available resources, and $2,015 per family for the federal share (Exhibit 2.2). The comparable national averages for per family costs were $4,438 and $2,689, respectively

Exhibit 2.2: MEES Funds per Family per Year (1995-96)

Types of Funds	Average Per Family Cost
MEES and local funds	$2,707
MEES funds	$2,015

Note: These averages are based on data from 8 MEES projects.

Although the MEES average budget ($248,407, see Exhibit 2.1) was slightly larger than the national average ($245,273), the MEES' per-family cost was much less than the comparable national averages. These seemingly contradictory findings may be an indication of the fundamental difference between the MEES projects and all other Even Start projects. At least some MEES projects may be faced with large waves of new families enrolling in their projects in one season and then leaving after a few months of stay in the community. Their limited participation may restrict the extent of their involvement in educational activities and also result in a relatively low service cost per family.

Again, we note that the MEES data are based on very few projects, and the number of MEES families served may not be accurate. The national evaluation data are not adequate to further examine the findings reported above.

TYPE OF COMMUNITY IN WHICH MEES PROJECTS ARE LOCATED

In 1995-96, the majority of the 9 MEES projects operated in areas that included mixed urban-rural communities (4 projects) or in primarily rural areas (3 projects). Only 1 project operated in an urban area (Exhibit 2.3). (One project did not provide information regarding the community setting.)

Exhibit 2.3: Type of Community in Which the MEES Projects Operated (1995-96)

Type of Community	Number of Projects
Entirely metropolitan area (Urban)	1
Metropolitan and non-metropolitan combined (Mixed)	4
Non-metropolitan area (Rural)	3

AVAILABILITY OF NON-EVEN START ADULT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Most of the MEES projects reported that, aside from the services they provide, similar services for adult education, English-as-a-second-language (ESL) courses, and educational programs for children ages 3-5 are available to low-income families in their communities (Exhibit 2.4). However, without the MEES, parenting education and early childhood education for infants and toddlers would not be available in more than half of these communities.

In general, the MEES projects reported a similar degree of availability of educational services in their communities to all Even Start projects, except for two areas. Compared to the national Even Start percentages, family literacy services and programs for infants and toddlers were available in more communities where MEES projects operated. Sixty-seven percent and 44 percent of MEES projects reported availability of family literacy and infant/toddler programs, respectively, compared to 16 percent and 26 percent of all projects. (However, readers must keep in mind that the MEES percentages are based on very few projects.)

Exhibit 2.4: MEES and All Even Start Projects Reporting Availability of Non-Even Start Educational Services in Their Communities (1995-96)

Non-Even Start Educational Services	Percent (Number) of MEES Projects	Percent of All Even Start Projects
Adult basic education (grades 0-8)	8 (89%)	77%
Adult secondary education/GED preparation (grades 9-12)	7 (78%)	87%
English as a second language (ESL)	5 (56%)	61%
Parenting education	4 (44%)	46%
Early childhood education for children ages 0-2	4 (44%)	26%
Early childhood education for children ages 3-4	8 (89%)	80%
Early childhood education for children age 5	7 (78%)	76%
Other family literacy programs	6 (67%)	16%

Note: The national percentages are based on data from 556 projects.

PROJECT STAFFING

On average, a MEES project was staffed with approximately 13 individuals who were paid by MEES funds: 2 administrators; 6 instructors; 3 aides; 1 family specialist; 1 support service provider (e.g., a social worker or child care provider); and 1 evaluator (Exhibit 2.5).

The MEES projects funded more staff than the national average of 10 Even Start paid staff members. The difference was particularly notable for instructors and aides—the national averages being 4 and 2, respectively.

Exhibit 2.5: Number of MEES-Paid Staff and Their Assignments (1995-96)

Staff	Average Across MEES Projects	Range
Administrator	1.7 staff	0 - 5 staff
Instructor	6.2	1-15
Aide	3.1	0-12
Family specialists	0.6	0-3
Support service providers	0.7	0-3
Evaluators	0.8	0-1
Others	0	0
Total across all categories	13.0	5-22

Note: This table includes only the staff who were paid totally or partially with MEES funds. The numbers do not include staff who were paid solely with local matching or collaborating agency funds. If staff had several roles, they were counted once under their primary assignment.

In adult education, the MEES projects had an average of 2 instructors paid by MEES and 2 volunteers (Exhibit 2.6). Parenting education was taught by about 3 instructors paid by MEES and 2 volunteers. Early childhood education was taught by 6 instructors assisted by 6 volunteers.

Exhibit 2.6: Number of MEES-Paid Instructors and Volunteers, by Instructional Area (1995-1996)

	Instructors		Volunteers	
Instructional Area	Average	Range	Average	Range
Adult education	1.9	0-5	2.2	0-10
Parenting education	3.3	0-15	2.1	0-4
Early childhood education	5.7	1-15	5.7	0-16
Total	6.2	1-15	9.7	0-20

Note: The total is less than the sum of staff in three instructional areas because instructors and volunteers could be counted in all areas they teach but only once in the total.

Compared to 1994-95, staff paid by MEES increased in the area of early childhood education (from 4 instructors and 4 volunteers). Allocation of staff for adult and parenting education remained consistent from the previous year.

EDUCATIONAL AND RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCES OF STAFF

Compared to 1994-95, the educational backgrounds of MEES instructors were considerably higher in 1995-96: Fifty percent had earned a bachelor's degree; 18 percent had a master's degree (Exhibit 2.7). The comparable percentages for 1994-95 were 30 and 11, respectively. Eighty-six percent of aides had at least a high school diploma or GED certificate; 7 percent had a bachelor's degree.

In addition to their academic degrees, 24 percent of teachers and almost 14 percent of aides had earned their Child Development Associates' certificate (CDA) or some other certification pertinent to the area they taught in Migrant Education Even Start. The majority of instructors (56 percent) and aides (63 percent) paid by MEES had 1-5 years of relevant work experience. Twenty-five percent of aides had less than 1 year of relevant experience.

Exhibit 2.7: Academic Degrees and Years of Experience of MEES Instructors and Aides (1995-96)

Highest Level of Education Completed	Percent of Instructors	Percent of Aides
Did not complete HS diploma or GED	0%	7%
High school diploma or GED	29%	86%
AA	3%	0%
BA/BS	50%	7%
MA/MS/MEd	18%	0%
PhD/EdD	0%	0%
Special certification or endorsements (including CDA) relevant to Even Start instruction	24%	14%
Years of Experience		
Less than 1 year	0%	25%
1-5 years	56%	63%
6-10 years	40%	13%
More than 10 years	4%	0%

Note: The total number of instructors used to calculate the education percentage was 38, and the number used to calculate the work experience percentage was 45. The total number of aides used to calculate the education percentage was 28, and the number used to calculate the work experience percentage was 8.

INSERVICE TRAINING

As shown in Exhibit 2.8, MEES staff on average received more days of inservice training per year than staff in all Even Start projects. The difference was greatest for MEES aides, who on average received 4 days more inservice training than the national average. In addition, family specialists received an average of 2 days more inservice training than the typical family specialist, and MEES administrators and instructors each received an average of 1 more day than the national averages.

Exhibit 2.8: Average Days per Year of Inservice Training Provided to Staff (1995-96)

Staff Category	MEES Staff	All Even Start Project Staff
Administrators	9 days	8 days
Instructors	8 days	7 days
Family specialists	9 days	7 days
Aides	9 days	5 days

Note: The average days of inservice for MEES administrators and instructors are based on data from 7 projects; the averages for MEES family specialists and aides are based on data from 5 projects. The average days of inservice for all Even Start projects are based on data from 555 projects.

Exhibit 2.9 shows the percentages of projects that provided inservice training on a range of topics to most of their staff. The MEES projects consistently provided training to most staff members in most of the topic areas.

Exhibit 2.9: Percent (Number) of MEES and All Even Start Projects Providing Inservice Training to Most Staff, by Topic (1995-96)

Training Topics	MEES Projects	All Projects
Program Coordination		
Planning or program improvement	89% (8)	74%
Local program evaluation	89% (8)	50%
Interagency collaboration	89% (8)	49%
Visiting other programs	75% (6)	32%
Team building	67% (6)	68%
Conducting home visits	67% (6)	54%
National program evaluation	67% (6)	23%
Recruitment	56% (5)	55%
First Aid, CPR, or other emergency procedures	50% (4)	39%
Retention strategies	44% (4)	55%
Adult Education		
Reading, writing, math, social studies	67% (6)	23%
ESL	63% (5)	11%
Vocational/occupational	50% (4)	13%
Assessment	44% (4)	36%
Parenting Education		
Parent and child activities	78% (7)	69%
Parent's role as a teacher	78% (7)	60%
Child rearing, child development	78% (7)	60%
Life skills	67% 6)	46%
Early Childhood Education		
Child development	78% (7)	64%
Assessment	67% (6)	50%
Classroom or behavior management	67% (6)	46%
ESL	63% (5)	15%
School readiness	56% (5)	44%
Family Characteristics		
Relating instruction to ethnic/cultural backgrounds	78% (7)	43%
Assessing family educational needs	78% (7)	42%
Adapting instruction for learners with special needs	78% (7)	30%
Dealing with family or personal problems	56% (5)	48%

Note: The national percentages are based on data from 563 projects.

Although the MEES percentages are based on a very small number of projects, they are generally higher than the national percentages. In particular, the MEES projects provided more training than all Even Start projects combined in the following areas: interagency collaboration; local and national evaluation; conducting home visits; visiting other programs; ESL for adults; adult education subjects; vocational education; parent's role as a teacher; parents' life skills;

ESL instructions for children; school readiness; child development; classroom or behavior management; assessing family educational needs; issues related to ethnic/cultural backgrounds of families; and adapting instructions for learners with special needs.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The MEES projects were asked to describe staff primarily responsible for delivering various components of core educational services to participants. The categories are: staff paid with MEES funds; staff paid by one of the agencies collaborating with MEES; or staff from both. (Note: Project instructors were considered as MEES staff if any portion of their salaries was paid with MEES funds.)

Among MEES projects, most of the adult education classes were conducted by staff from collaborating agencies or by both MEES and collaborating agency staff. In contrast, the majority of the parenting education and early childhood education (ECE) staff were primarily funded by MEES, particularly ECE for younger children (Exhibit 2.10). These results were very similar to the patterns of collaborative arrangements reported by all Even Start projects.

Exhibit 2.10: Percent (Number) of MEES Project Sites[4] Using MEES and Collaborating Agency Staff in Core Educational Services (1995-96)

Educational Services	MEES	Other Agency	Both
Adult Education			
Beginning adult basic education (grades 0-4)	10% (1)	20% (2)	60% (6)
Intermediate adult basic education (grades 5-8)	10% (1)	30% (3)	50% (5)
Adult secondary education/GED preparation (grades 9-12)	18% (2)	27% (3)	55% (6)
ESL	10% (1)	20% (2)	70% (7)
Parenting Education	**82% (9)**	**0% (0)**	**18% (2)**
Early Childhood Education			
Under age 3	73% (8)	18% (2)	9% (1)
Ages 3 and 4	64% (7)	18% (2)	18% (2)
Age 5	55% (6)	18% (2)	27% (3)
Ages 6 and 7	27% (3)	36% (4)	36% (4)

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because some projects indicated that some services were not provided by MEES or Other Agency.

[4] As explained earlier in this chapter, the term "site" refers to service delivery designs and approaches, and a single project may have multiple sites/designs. A total of 12 sites were reported by the 9 MEES projects that operated in 1995-96. ESIS data regarding staffing, support services, recruitment, hours of services offered, and contents of educational services were collected at the site level.

SUPPORT SERVICES THAT MEES FAMILIES NEED

The MEES project directors were asked to indicate whether "all," "many," "few," or "none" of their project families were in need of 14 categories of support services. Exhibit 2.11 displays the percentages of project sites responding to each category of support services.

Exhibit 2.11: Percent (Number) of MEES and All Even Start Project Sites, by Support Services Needed by All and/or Most Families (1995-96)

Support Services	MEES Project Sites	All Even Start Project Sites
Child care	82% (9)	85%
Nutrition assistance	82% (9)	74%
Transportation	73% (8)	76%
Family support	73% (8)	79%
Translators or interpreters	73% (8)	30%
Health care	64% (7)	68%
Meals	64% (7)	67%
Employment assistance	55% (6)	64%
Financial assistance	46% (5)	61%
Housing	46% (5)	37%
Case management	36% (4)	53%
Mental health	18% (2)	32%
Crisis intervention	18% (2)	37%
Special care for person(s) with disabilities	9% (1)	7%

Note: The national percentages are based on data from 635 project sites.

The needs for child care, nutrition assistance, transportation, and family support were as prevalent among MEES families as they were among all Even Start families. The majority of the MEES project sites reported that many of their families needed assistance with translating/interpreting services (73%), compared to 30 percent of families across all Even Start projects. The MEES projects also reported somewhat lower levels of need among their families for employment assistance, financial assistance, case management, and mental health services, compared to all Even Start families.

BARRIERS TO PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Projects were presented with a list of potential barriers to program implementation and asked to rate each barrier from 1 to 5, where 1 is no problem and 5 is a major problem. In general, the average ratings indicated that projects did not face many serious barriers in implementing MEES services. The national findings also lead to a similar conclusion. Similar to all Even Start projects, MEES projects cited the following issues as presenting relatively greater challenges: improving retention or motivation of participants; providing

transportation to families; improving attendance; and finding quality child care (Exhibit 2.12).

On the other hand, a greater percentage of the MEES projects reported that complying with the national evaluation requirements presented a challenge to them. The evaluation schedule based on the regular 10-month educational calendar and the absence of evaluation questions pertaining to serving a highly mobile population have been identified as key limitations of this evaluation for the MEES projects by MEES directors.

Exhibit 2.12: Average Rating of Barriers to Program Implementation (1995-96)

Barriers to Program Implementation	Mean
Improving retention or motivation of participants	2.78
Arranging or providing adequate transportation	2.67
Understanding or meeting national evaluation requirements	2.56
Improving attendance	2.44
Finding quality child care	2.44
Coordinating with other agencies	2.11
Finding adult education, parenting education, or early childhood services locally	2.11
Obtaining sufficient financial resources	2.00
Meeting social service needs of families	1.89
Working within the confines of the local model	1.89
Hiring and retaining qualified staff	1.78
Recruiting families most in need	1.67
Obtaining adequate facilities, space, or equipment	1.56
Understanding or working within state guidelines	1.56
Meeting local evaluation requirements	1.44
Understanding or working within federal regulations	1.44
Recruiting eligible families	1.33

Note: The means are based on ratings on a scale of "1 = no problem" to "5 = major problem" received from 9 MEES projects.

NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The MEES projects were presented with a list of issues related to program implementation and asked to rate each issue as areas of No Need, Some Need, or Great Need for technical assistance (Exhibit 2.13). Among the MEES projects, the issues needing assistance were: fiscal; increasing participant retention; using computers; and transportation (22 percent of projects reported great needs in each category). Across all Even Start projects, the types of technical assistance needed and the extent of need were generally similar to those reported by the MEES projects.

Exhibit 2.13: Percent of MEES and All Even Start Projects, by Areas of Some and/or Great Need for Technical Assistance (1995-1996)

Technical Assistance Issues	MEES Projects	All Even Start Projects
Program Operations		
Staff development	78% (7)	67%
Increasing participant involvement or retention	67% (6)	80%
Funding or fiscal issues	67% (6)	72%
Interagency collaboration	44% (4)	53%
Program administration	44% (4)	40%
Recruiting families	33% (3)	50%
Educational Services		
Sharing information with other projects	100% (9)	63%
Approaches to parenting education	78% (7)	61%
Approaches to early childhood education	78% (7)	47%
Identifying effective practices	67% (6)	66%
Approaches to adult education	67% (6)	60%
Using computers	67% (6)	72%
Improving retention	56% (5)	77%
Making home visits	56% (5)	54%
Integrating program components	56% (5)	52%
Selecting or implementing curriculum materials	56% (5)	53%
Support Services		
Maintain balance of educational and support services	89% (8)	58%
Social/health problems	78% (7)	60%
Solve transportation problems	78% (7)	53%
Evaluation		
Comply with national evaluation requirements	89% (8)	50%
Administer assessment instruments	78% (7)	49%
Conduct local evaluation	56% (5)	47%

Note: The national percentages are based on data from 555 projects.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

The MEES projects were presented with a list of recruitment strategies commonly used by Even Start projects and asked to indicate how often they used each strategy: "not used"; "used little"; "used some"; or "used a great deal" (Exhibit 2.14). Of the 12 project sites reported by 9 MEES projects, the recruitment strategies used more commonly were word of mouth, collaborating agencies, and home visits.

Exhibit 2.14: Percent (Number) of MEES Project Sites Using Special Recruitment Strategies "a Great Deal" (1995-96)

Recruitment Strategy	Percent of MEES Project Sites
Word of mouth	50% (5)
Collaborating agencies	40% (4)
Home visits	36% (4)
Public school referrals (e.g., Title I)	30% (3)
Telephone contact	30% (3)
Presentations or visits to community agencies	20% (2)
Referrals by Head Start or other preschool program	20% (2)
Referrals by community or governmental agencies	10% (1)
Walking the neighborhood	10% (1)
Posters or flyers	10% (1)
Targeted mailings	0% (0)
Mass media	0% (0)
Other	33% (2)

The MEES responses varied somewhat from the responses of all Even Start projects in two ways. First, the percentages of project sites using any of the recruitment strategies were generally lower among the MEES project sites than the national percentages. For example, more than 70 percent of all project sites reported using "word of mouth;" more than 60 percent used collaborating agency referrals; about 50 percent used referrals by community or governmental agencies; about 45 percent used public school referrals; and another 45 percent used referrals from Head Start or other preschool programs (not shown in Exhibit 2.14). This may mean that MEES projects are located in or very near the migrant communities they serve and have more direct access to their target populations.

The second difference is the relative importance of home visits as a key recruitment strategy for MEES projects. Again, this method may be more feasible in communities where targeted families are concentrated. Home visits may also be more necessary for migrant agricultural families because many families may be new to the area and not connected with other community agencies that would provide referrals.

Recruiting the number of eligible families that each project intends to serve does not appear to be problematic for the majority of the MEES projects. Four of 11 project sites reported denying eligible families entry into the program or placing families on a waiting list until spaces became available. The reasons for denying services included families living outside target areas and families already participating in appropriate programs, thereby meeting their educational needs.

INTENSITY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES OFFERED TO FAMILIES

To assess the intensity of the educational services provided by MEES projects, we asked project directors to report the following: (1) scheduled contact times

per month; (2) hours per month; (3) number of months per year; and (4) hours per month that services are provided in participants' homes. These data were to represent the service delivery schedules for a typical family, not any specific family.

Many educational activities are intended to serve more than one purpose. For example, adult education classes might incorporate topics that are relevant to parenting education. The projects were instructed to "double-count" the hours of instruction that serve multiple purposes. Thus, if a project provides families two hours per month of parent-child activities during home visits, those two hours could count toward both parenting education and early childhood education as well as the hours of home-based instruction for both service areas.

Exhibit 2.15 lists the scheduled contact hours averaged across MEES projects (in bold) as well as the comparable averages for all Even Start projects (in parentheses). For the adult education services offered by MEES projects, the scheduled instructional sessions were on average 10 to 11 times a month, 10 to 11 months a year. In the 1994-95 evaluation, MEES projects reported the duration of adult education services *offered* to *typical* adult participants as 7 to 8 months. This typical duration, shorter than the national average of 10 months, was interpreted to reflect the seasonal relocation of program participants in many MEES projects. However, in the 1995-96 evaluation, the typical number of months of service is comparable to the regular 10-month academic calendar.

Among the MEES projects, the average hours of instruction per month for adult education was 23-25 hours, slightly lower than 25-28 hours reported in 1994-95. The 1995-96 figures translate to between 5 and 7 hours per week that the typical MEES adult student was expected to spend receiving instruction. A portion of this time, about 1 hour per month, was scheduled for families' homes as part of the home-based education component. When presenting these data, it is important to note the wide range of responses across project sites. For example, the number of hours of adult education that MEES projects offered each month ranged from 4 to 56 hours.

The MEES parents were offered somewhat less time in parenting education than typical parents across all Even Start projects. The MEES parenting education was offered an average of 11 times per month, combining the activities for parents alone and for parents and children together. The two types of parenting education activities averaged about 8 to 9 hours per month and were held 9 months out of the year. Finally, approximately 3 hours out of the 8 to 9 hours in each type of parenting education activity were intended to occur in participants' homes.

Early childhood education had the most scheduled contact hours, notably more than the hours reported by all Even Start projects. The scheduled instruction hours for children ages 3 and older were 69 to 74 hours per month, or about 16 to 17 hours per week. The hours of educational activities provided to children at home were essentially the same as home-based adult and parenting education hours. This means that MEES projects are providing substantially longer hours

of center-based services to children than the national averages for all Even Start projects.

Exhibit 2.15: Average Scheduled Contact Hours in MEES Project Sites, by Educational Area (1995-96) (Averages across all Even Start project sites are shown in parentheses.)

Educational Area	Number of MEES Sites Reporting	Number of Times per Month	Number of Hours per Month	Duration of Instruction in Months	Hours per Month Services Are in Home-Based Setting
Adult Education					
Beginning adult basic education (grades 0-4)	9	**10 times** (12 times)	**23 hours** (36 hours)	**10 months** (10 months)	**4 hours** (4 hours)
Intermediate adult basic education (grades 5-8)	8	**11** (12)	**25** (38)	**11** (10)	**4** (4)
Secondary/GED (grades 9-12)	11	**11** (13)	**24** (40)	**10** (10)	**3** (5)
ESL	10	**11** (12)	**24** (33)	**10** (10)	**3** (4)
Parenting Education					
Parent alone	11	**5** (7)	**9** (11)	**9** (10)	**3** (3)
Parent and child together	11	**6** (8)	**8** (9)	**9** (10)	**3** (3)
Early Childhood Education					
Under age 3	11	**10** (11)	**46** (38)	**10** (10)	**3** (4)
Ages 3 and 4	11	**13** (14)	**69** (53)	**10** (10)	**3** (4)
Age 5	10	**15** (14)	**73** (56)	**9** (10)	**4** (3)
Ages 6 and 7	9	**14** (13)	**74** (62)	**9** (10)	**4** (3)

Note: The national percentages are based on data from 635 project sites.

Similar to the adult education services, the number of months of early childhood education services offered by MEES projects was shorter (4-7 months) in 1994-95 than the typical 10-month academic calendar, but it increased to 9 to 10 months in the 1995-96 evaluation.

The MEES projects were asked to indicate how many hours a typical family spends each month in parent-child joint activities in each of three settings: (1) home visits; (2) center or classroom; and (3) field trips, meals, or other social functions. On average, the MEES projects offered about 3 hours of joint parent-child activities in the home, about 5 hours in the center or classroom, and 3 hours in extracurricular activities (Exhibit 2.16). The parent-child joint activity hours reported by all Even Start projects were somewhat greater: averages of 3 hours

during home visits, 9 hours in center-based settings, and 5 hours during special events.

Exhibit 2.16: Hours per Month a Typical Family Spends in Parent-Child Activities, by Setting (1995-96)

Parent-Child Activity Settings	MEES Average (and Range) Hours per Month	All Even Start Projects' Hours per Month
Home visits	3 hours (0-5)	3 hours
Center or classroom	5 hours (1-20)	9 hours
Field trips, meals, or social functions	3 hours (0-8)	5 hours

Note: The MEES percentages are based on data from 11 MEES project sites; the national percentages are based on data from 635 project sites.

The MEES project directors also were asked to indicate how many hours per month adult education was combined with parenting education for a typical family in their projects. Integration of these two educational components occurred on average 8 to 10 hours per month (Exhibit 2.17). These results were slightly less than the average of 10 to 11 hours in 1994-95 and the 1995-96 national averages of 12 to 14 hours.

Exhibit 2.17: Hours per Month that Adult Education Is Combined with Parenting Education (1995-96)

Adult Education Components	MEES Average (and Range) Hours per Month	All Even Start Projects' Hours per Month
Beginning adult basic education (grades 0-4)	8 hours (0-44)	12 hours
Intermediate adult basic education (grades 5-8)	8 hours (0-44)	13 hours
Adult secondary education/ GED preparation (grades 9-12)	10 hours (0-44)	14 hours
ESL	10 hours (0-44)	12 hours

Note: The MEES percentages are based on data from 11 MEES project sites; the national percentages are based on data from 635 project sites.

CONTENTS OF ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Exhibit 2.18 summarizes the MEES adult basic education services in terms of (1) the extent of incorporating functional literacy in the primary instructional approach and (2) the context in which instruction was presented. The majority of MEES project sites included little or no functional literacy in their beginning adult basic education instruction. Most of the project sites reported incorporating functional literacy in their secondary/GED classes.

We also asked MEES project directors to describe their adult basic education services in terms of three broad categories of instructional contexts: life skills, vocational, and parenting. Project directors were asked to select all applicable instructional approaches for each educational level.

Many MEES project sites employed a combination of instructional contexts across the four educational levels. In general, life skills and parenting were commonly used as contexts for adult education instruction and ESL. Vocational materials and topics were used by fewer project sites, especially for beginning and intermediate adult education programs.

Exhibit 2.18: Percent (Number) of MEES Project Sites, by Adult Education Approaches (1995-96)

Primary Instructional Approach	Adult Education Components			
Degree of Functional Literacy	**Beginning (0-4)**	**Intermediate (5-8)**	**Secondary/ GED (9-12)**	**ESL**
Mostly functional literacy	25% (2)	43% (3)	78% (7)	60% (6)
Some functional literacy	25% (2)	43% (3)	11% (1)	20% (2)
Little or no functional literacy	50% (4)	14% (1)	11% (1)	20% (2)
Instructional Context	**Beginning (0-4)**	**Intermediate (5-8)**	**Secondary/ GED (9-12)**	**ESL**
Life skills	67% (8)	58% (7)	58% (7)	75% (9)
Vocational	25% (3)	25% (3)	33% (4)	42% (5)
Parenting	67% (8)	58% (7)	58% (7)	67% (8)

The MEES project sites were asked to describe the preparation period before the parents decide to enroll in MEES adult education and parenting education. Most project sites conducted home visits as preparation for the transition (10 project sites). Six sites conducted orientation sessions for the parents (Exhibit 2.19).

Exhibit 2.19: Percent (Number) of MEES Project Sites That Offered Preparatory Activities Before Initiating Adult and Parenting Education Services (1995-96)

Preparatory Activities	Percent of MEES Project Sites
Conduct home visits	83% (10)
Conduct orientation sessions	67% (8)
Begin adult education first	33% (4)
Begin parenting education first	25% (3)
Invite to social functions	25% (3)
Invite to field trips or other outings	25% (3)
Other	8% (1)
No preparation period before adult and parenting education	0% (0)

PARENTING EDUCATION ACTIVITIES AND PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITIES OFFERED

The MEES projects were presented with a list of topics and issues commonly addressed in parenting education activities and asked to indicate whether they address each of these topics with most families, some families, few families, or

no families (Exhibit 2.20). Most of the reporting project sites indicated they address most of the topics listed with most of their families.

Exhibit 2.20: Percent (Number) of MEES and All Even Start Project Sites Providing Various Types of Parenting Education Activities to "Most Families" (1995-96)

Parenting Education Activities	MEES Project Sites	All Even Start Project Sites
Health and nutrition	100% (11)	83%
Parent-child literacy	100% (11)	94%
Child's safety and well-being	100% (11)	87%
Applying child development principles	91% (10)	90%
Child's social skills	91% (10)	87%
Building parent self-esteem	91% (10)	91%
Building parent life skills	91% (10)	85%
Awareness of vocational and educational opportunities	91% (10)	68%
Child's motor skills	90% (9)	82%
Child's language & thinking skills	82% (9)	91%
Preparing children for school routines	82% (9)	64%
Awareness of community and social services	82% (9)	81%
Behavior management	64% (7)	81%
Using TV or outings for instruction	55% (6)	53%
Assisting with homework	46% (5)	52%

Note: The national percentages are based on data from 635 project sites.

In particular, the following topics are emphasized consistently across all MEES project sites: health and nutrition; parent-child literacy; child's safety and well-being; child's development; child's language, thinking, motor, and social skills; parent self-esteem and life skills; and information on vocational and educational opportunities for parents.

The topics emphasized by MEES projects generally were similar to topics emphasized by all Even Start projects with a few exceptions. The MEES projects addressed the vocational and educational opportunities for parents more (91 percent) than all Even Start projects (68 percent). The MEES projects dealt less with children's behavior management and more with school routines compared to all Even Start projects.

The MEES projects were asked to what extent various activities involving the parent and child together were used in their programs (Exhibit 2.21). All MEES projects taught most families language development and health and nutrition. In addition, most of the projects taught reading and storytelling and sensory stimulation to most families. Overall, most of the activities were offered to at least some families by most MEES project sites. The exception was computer activities.

Exhibit 2.21: Percent (Number) of MEES and All Even Start Project Sites Offering Various Parent-Child Activities to "Most Families" (1995-96)

Parenting Education Activities	MEES Project Sites	All Even Start Project Sites
Health and nutrition	100% (11)	81%
Language development	100% (11)	90%
Reading, storytelling, pre-reading	91% (10)	92%
Sensory stimulation	90% (9)	73%
Early academic skills	82% (9)	75%
Arts and crafts	82% (9)	77%
Activities selected and led by child	82% (9)	64%
Gross motor activities	73% (8)	75%
Social development	73% (8)	89%
Independence, self-discipline, self-help skills	73% (8)	80%
Working with numbers	64% (7)	61%
Working with letters and writing	55% (5)	51%
Computer activities	36% (4)	25%

Note: The national percentages are based on data from 635 project sites.

With a few exceptions, activities included in the MEES parent-child joint sessions were similar to those reported by all Even Start projects. The MEES projects offered more activities selected by children and activities dealing with health and nutrition and sensory stimulation issues than all Even Start projects combined. The MEES projects dealt with children's social development less than Even Start projects in general.

INTEGRATION OF CORE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The MEES project directors were asked to rate the extent to which instructional activities were integrated across (1) parenting education and adult basic education; (2) parenting education and early childhood education; and (3) adult basic education and early childhood education for their typical family. Integration of services was operationalized as the frequency with which activities in two core educational components were (1) provided in the same setting (e.g., the same room or building); (2) taught by the same instructors; (3) used the same or parallel activities; and (4) planned or coordinated for parents and children together. Exhibit 2.22 displays the results for each measure of service integration.

Of the three educational components, the highest degree of integration was reported between parenting and early childhood education, especially in the form of parent-child joint activities.

Exhibit 2.22: Percent (Number) of MEES Project Sites That Integrated Three Core Educational Services Usually or Always (1995-96)

Nature of Integration	Parenting & Adult Basic Education	Parenting & Early Childhood Education	Adult & Early Childhood Education
Same setting	**27% (3)**	**27% (3)**	**36% (4)**
Same instructors	18% (2)	46% (5)	27% (3)
Same or parallel activities	55% (6)	73% (8)	46% (5)
Parent-child joint activities	73% (8)	91% (10)	64% (7)

The extent of integration of services reported by MEES projects was generally similar to the national data. However, compared to all Even Start projects, a lower percentage of MEES projects integrated service components by offering activities in the same setting, and a higher percentage of MEES projects used similar or parallel activities as a method of service integration.

CHAPTER 3: CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANT EDUCATION EVEN START FAMILIES

This section describes the social and economic characteristics of families that participated in the Migrant Education Even Start projects during the program year 1995-96, the second year in which family data were collected for the current national evaluation. In most Even Start projects, there were families that continued from previous years as well as new families that enrolled during 1995-96. For the purpose of the national evaluation, we asked projects to report family demographic data only at the time of enrollment. This section presents the following characteristics of families at the time of intake:

- Family structure and size;
- Family economic characteristics;
- Parents' employment status at intake;
- Ethnic backgrounds of families in MEES projects;
- Length of residence in the United States;
- English language proficiency among the MEES parents.
- Parents' educational backgrounds; and
- Non-Even Start services families received.

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND SIZE

Seventy-six percent of the families served by the MEES were headed by couples (Exhibit 3.1). Only 16 percent were headed by a single parent, and 8 percent represented extended families. In general, a much lower percentage of Even Start families (48 percent) were two-parent families, compared to the MEES families (76 percent). A higher percentage of Even Start families were headed by single parents (38 percent), compared to the MEES families (16 percent).

Exhibit 3.1: Percent and Number of MEES Families, by Family Structure (1995-96)

Family Structure	Percent	Number
Couple with children	76%	423
Single parent	16%	90
Extended family	8 %	43
Other	<1 %	2
Total	**100%**	**558**

The average size of MEES families was 6.2, with 2 children within the MEES eligible age (birth through 7 years). Typically, these families also had 1 to 2 additional children between the ages of 8 and 15 years and 2 adults (Exhibit 3.2). The average size of MEES families was slightly larger than the average of 5.5 persons for all Even Start families.

Exhibit 3.2: Average Size of MEES Families (1995-96)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Children below the age of 8 years	2.1	1.2
Children aged 8 through 15 years	1.6	1.1
Persons aged 16 or older	2.2	0.9
Total number in the family	**6.2**	**2.2**

Note: Numbers in this table are based on data for 552 families.

FAMILY ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Seventy-six percent of families served by MEES had annual incomes of less than $12,000 at the time of intake (Exhibit 3.3). With the average family size of 6, this is well below the poverty level. A sizable portion of MEES families reported severely low incomes; 55 percent earned and/or received annual incomes of less than $9,000. The percentage of MEES families in this poorest income range was comparable to 56 percent of all Even Start families in this income range.

Exhibit 3.3: Percent and Number of MEES Families, by Annual Income (1995-96 Participants)

Annual Income	Percent	Number
Under $9,000	55%	298
$9,000 - $11,999	21%	114
$12,000 - $14,999	13%	73
$15,000 or more	11%	61
Total	**100%**	**546**

At the time of intake, 81 percent of families served by MEES reported that job wages were their primary source of income (Exhibit 3.4). In contrast, only 46 percent of all Even Start families in 1995-96 reported wages as the primary source, and the remaining relied on government assistance. Though only 14 percent of the MEES families reported government assistance as the main source of income, 57 percent of MEES parents indicated receiving welfare in the past, and 52 percent reported that they were receiving welfare at the time of enrollment in MEES (not shown in exhibit).

Exhibit 3.4: Percent and Number of MEES Families, by Primary Income Source (1995-96 Participants)

Source of Income	Percent	Number
Wages from a job	81%	452
Government assistance (e.g., AFDC)	14%	78
Alimony or child support	1%	5
Other	4%	21
Total	**100%**	**556**

PARENTS' EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT INTAKE

Fifty-two percent of MEES participating parents were employed at the time of enrollment. This is more than twice as high as the national Even Start figure of 25 percent. Of the MEES parents who were employed, 37 percent had full-time jobs. This is a substantial decrease from 50 percent in 1994-95 (Exhibit 3.5). However, the percentage of parents with part-time jobs increased from 49 percent in 1994-95 to 62 percent in 1995-96.[5]

Exhibit 3.5: Percent and Number of MEES Parents, by Type of Employment (1995-96 Participants)

Type of Employment	Percent	Number
Part-time job	62%	235
Full-time job	37%	140
Job training program	1%	3
Total	**100%**	**378**

Note: The percentages in this table are based on the participating MEES parents who were employed at the time of enrollment.

Of the MEES parents who were not employed at the time of enrollment, 26 percent were enrolled in school and 25 percent were seeking employment (Exhibit 3.6). Forty-nine percent, however, were neither seeking employment, enrolled in school, retired, nor disabled, compared to 37 percent of parents in this category in Even Start projects nationally. Conversely, 26 percent of unemployed MEES parents were enrolled in school, while 46 percent of unemployed parents across all Even Start projects were enrolled in school at the time of intake.

[5] Eighty-one percent of families reported wages as their primary income source, and 52 percent of parents had jobs. This may reflect the fact that many migrant agricultural families had two parents, where the parent who was not-employed participated in Even Start while the other worked.

Exhibit 3.6: Percent and Number of MEES Parents Who Were Not Employed, by Employment Plans (1995-96)

Employment Plans	Percent	Number
Not currently seeking employment	46%	160
Enrolled in school	26%	92
Currently seeking employment	25%	87
Retired or disabled	3%	10
Total	**100%**	**349**

Note: The percentages in this table are based on the participating MEES parents who were not employed at the time of enrollment.

ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS OF FAMILIES IN MEES PROJECTS

A majority of adults in MEES projects were Hispanic (64 percent), and 21 and 10 percent of the adults were Caucasian and Asian, respectively (Exhibit 3.7). African Americans and American Indians constituted a small percentage of the MEES population.

The ethnic composition of MEES families differed considerably from the Even Start projects nationally. Across all Even Start projects, 35 percent of families participating in 1995-96 were Hispanic; 31 percent Caucasian; 25 percent African American; 4 percent Asian; and 3 percent American Indian.

In the MEES projects, 57 percent of the children were Hispanic; 28 percent Caucasian; 8 percent Asian; and 7 percent African American.

Exhibit 3.7: Percent and Number of Parents and Children in MEES Projects, by Ethnicity (1995-96 Participants)

Ethnicity	Parents		Children	
	Percent	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**
Hispanic	64%	499	57%	468
Caucasian	21%	163	28%	234
Asian	10%	76	8%	65
African American	5%	42	7%	58
American Indian	<1%	1	<1%	1
Total	**100%**	**781**	**100%**	**826**

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Twenty-eight (28) percent of the families served by MEES projects had lived in the United States for five years or less at the time of their intake interview (Exhibit 3.8).

Exhibit 3.8: Percent and Number of MEES Families, by Length of Residence in the United States (1995-96 Participants)

Length of Residence	Percent	Number
Less than one year	6%	33
One to five years	22%	123
More than five years	72%	398
Total	**100%**	**554**

Note: This information was missing for 4 families that enrolled in 1995-96.

Families were asked to indicate the longest amount of time anyone in the family had lived in the United States. We expect that many families served by MEES may have immigrated to the United States recently. However, in many migrant families, one parent (e.g., the father) may first move to the United States to secure employment before the rest of the family immigrates. In such cases, the later immigrants (e.g., the mother and children) may be most likely to receive MEES services. Yet, according to the data collection instruction, families would report how long the father had lived in the United States. Thus, the data reported by the MEES projects for this question may not accurately portray the length of residence in the United States by participating parents.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG MEES PARENTS

Nearly two-thirds of MEES parents who enrolled in 1995-96 spoke Spanish at home (Exhibit 3.9). Seventy-one percent of new MEES parents spoke languages other than English, compared to 38 percent of new parents across all Even Start projects.

Exhibit 3.9: Percent and Number of MEES Parents Who Enrolled in 1995-96, by Language Spoken at Home

Language Spoken at Home	Percent	Number
Spanish	64%	319
English	29%	146
Other	7%	33
Total	**100%**	**498**

Of all the MEES parents, including those who spoke English at home, the majority did not understand (69 percent), speak (72 percent), or read (75 percent) English well or at all (Exhibit 3.10). In contrast, the percentage of parents across all Even Start projects who enrolled in 1995-96 and could not understand, speak, or read English well or at all were 24 percent, 25 percent, and 27 percent, respectively.

Exhibit 3.10: Percent (Number) of MEES Parents Who Enrolled in 1995-96, by Their Ability to Use the English Language

How well does adult...	Very Well	Well	Not Well	Not at All
Understand English	10% (34)	21% (75)	37% (133)	32% (116)
Speak English	9% (31)	20% (71)	36% (129)	36% (121)
Read English	10% (35)	15% (55)	35% (124)	40% (144)

We further focused on MEES parents who spoke languages other than English at home ("ESL parents") and examined the languages they used to read to their children. Five percent of these parents reported an inability to read in any language. Excluding these parents (i.e., focusing only on ESL parents who could read in at least one language), the majority of these parents read to their children in their native languages. Among the ESL, MEES parents who could read, 76 percent read to their children in Spanish; 13 percent read to their children in other foreign languages; and 10 percent in English (Exhibit 3.11).

Exhibit 3.11 Percent of ESL, MEES Parents and Language Used to Read to Children (1995-96 Participants)

Language Used to Read	Percent of ESL MEES Parents
Spanish	76%
Other	13%
English	10%

Note: Percentages for this table are based on data for the 533 MEES parents who were able to read.

PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS

While only a very small percentage (2 percent) of parents enrolled in the MEES program with no previous schooling, almost one-third (31 percent) had only an elementary school education (6th grade or less). Further, a majority (63 percent) of parents in the MEES program in 1995-96 had gone no further than 9th grade (Exhibit 3.12).

The educational history of parents served by the MEES is substantially more limited than Even Start parents in general. The national Even Start data showed that 42 percent of participating parents had reached 10th through 12th grade and that 16 percent had completed high school or a GED. Among the MEES parents, the comparable percentages were 24 percent and 13 percent, respectively.

Exhibit 3.12: Percent and Number of MEES Parents, by Educational Background (1995-96 Participants)

Educational Background	Percent	Number
No education - 6th grade	33%	256
7th - 9th grade	30%	235
10th - 12th grade	24%	188
High school diploma/GED	10%	75
Beyond high school	3%	22
Total	**100%**	**776**

Additionally, 60 percent of MEES parents completed most of their formal education outside the United States (Exhibit 3.13), which is roughly twice as high as the average for all Even Start projects (33 percent). However, compared to the 1994-95 MEES participants, the percentage of parents educated outside the United States declined 10 percent in 1995-96.

Exhibit 3.13: Percent and Number of MEES Parents, by Where They Received Formal Education (1995-96 Participants)

Place of Education	Percent	Number
Educated in the United States	40%	308
Educated outside the United States	60%	459
Total	**100%**	**767**

NON-EVEN START SERVICES FAMILIES RECEIVED

MEES families were asked what educational and support services they had received prior to and at the time of enrolling in the MEES Program. The percentage of MEES families that received government assistance prior to enrollment (57 percent) is slightly higher than the percentage among all Even Start families (55 percent). In general, only a small percentage of MEES families received non-Even Start educational and social services (Exhibit 3.14). However, 27 percent of the MEES parents had received some ESL instruction prior to MEES, compared to 12 percent of all participating Even Start families.

There was a negligible number of MEES parents who had received employment training (workforce skills necessary to obtain a job); vocational education (e.g., training in special trades such as bookkeeping, hairdressing, etc.); and/or vocational rehabilitation (vocational training for persons with physical disabilities) services prior to MEES.

Exhibit 3.14: Percent and Number of MEES Parents, by Social or Educational Services Received (1995-96 Participants)

Social/Educational Services	Before MEES		At Enrollment	
	Percent	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**
Welfare	57%	452	52%	418
Employment training	3%	25	1%	11
Vocational education	3%	24	2%	17
Vocational rehabilitation	<1%	1	0%	0
Beginning adult basic education (grades 0-4)	3%	26	N/A	N/A
Intermediate adult basic education (grades 5-8)	2%	17	N/A	N/A
Adult secondary education (grades 9-12) or GED preparation	10%	83	N/A	N/A
ESL	27%	217	N/A	N/A
No services received	20%	160	29%	229

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because parents could receive multiple services. "N/A" indicates that data were not collected regarding non-Even Start educational services at the time of intake.

While some children had participated in some types of early childhood education (ECE) program prior to the MEES, the majority (57 percent) had not (Exhibit 3.15). For 46 percent of children, the MEES was their only source of educational service at the time of intake. The educational experiences of

children across all Even Start projects generally were similar to experiences of the MEES children.

Exhibit 3.15: Percent of Children Participating in Non-MEES Educational Programs Before and at Time of Enrolling in MEES (1995-96 Participants)

Educational Programs	Before MEES	At Enrollment
Head Start	13%	10%
Title I preschool	4%	3%
Early intervention, early childhood special education	1%	1%
Other preschool or infant/toddler program	5%	4%
Kindergarten	15%	14%
Primary school (grades 1-3)	9%	11%
None	57%	46%

Note: Percentages in this table are based on data for 845 MEES children.

CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPATION RATES OF MIGRANT EDUCATION EVEN START FAMILIES

This section describes the extent of participation in MEES educational services by parents and children. Participation data were collected for all families that were enrolled in the MEES in 1995-96. Because the data reported were collected as part of the national Even Start evaluation, most of the participation questions were asked in terms of the entire program year covering a 12-month period. This time frame is appropriate to standardize the collection of participation data across all projects. However, by definition, migrant agricultural families are mobile. In addition, information gathered from site visits conducted for the Study of Migrant Education Even Start Projects indicated that families in some MEES projects have a cyclical, seasonal participation pattern. They participate during certain months of the year and return after several months of migratory residence in other states. In some projects, only a small number of families return on a regular, cyclical basis, and the period of participation for most parents and children is limited to one migratory season. On the other end of the spectrum, some migrant families remain in one location, where children can attend the same schools year round, while one parent may move with migratory employment.

In the absence of information on the duration of enrollment for each family during the 1995-96 program year, the data presented in this section are averages for the entire year, which may tend to underestimate the extent of participation by migrant families **during the months of enrollment in MEES**.

This section addresses the following topics:

- Number of home visits made to MEES families;
- Extent of MEES parents' participation in adult education and parenting education services;
- Hours of participation in adult and parenting education;
- Extent of MEES children's participation in early childhood education services;
- Extent of participation in all three core services;
- Types of support services received by MEES families;
- Prevalence of children with special needs;
- Extent of retention and successful completion of educational goals;
- Parents' educational status at year end; and
- Parents' employment status at year end.

Number of Home Visits Made to MEES Families

On average, the MEES families participated in 9 home visits during the 1995-96 program year. This average is lower than the average for MEES projects in 1994-95 but higher than the national Even Start average of 7 to 8 home visits for 1995-96. The number of home visits across families ranged widely from none to 86. The top 25 percent of families had 14 to 60 home visits during the year, while the bottom 25 percent had 2 or fewer visits.

Extent of MEES Parents' Participation in Adult Education and Parenting Education Services

The basic Even Start model stipulates that at least one parent and one child participate in all three core services: adult education, parenting education, and early childhood education. Only 77 percent of MEES parents participated in parenting education activities, compared to 88 percent of all Even Start parents (Exhibit 4.1).

A relatively small percentage of MEES parents participated in adult education programs, ESL being the most commonly selected. Forty-two percent of MEES parents were enrolled in ESL; 9 percent participated in beginning adult basic education classes. However, only 5 percent and 11 percent enrolled in intermediate and secondary adult education classes, respectively.

In comparison, 40 percent of all Even Start parents participated in secondary adult education and GED preparation courses. The results for MEES parents are consistent with their relatively limited educational experiences and a common need for ESL instruction before being able to focus their efforts on basic education taught in English. Sixteen percent of MEES parents for whom we received participation data did not participate in parenting or adult education services.

Exhibit 4.1: Percent and Number of MEES Parents Who Participated in Adult and Parenting Education Services (1995-96)

Educational Services	Percent	Number
Parenting education	77%	661
Beginning adult basic education (grades 0-4)	9%	80
Intermediate adult basic education (grades 5-8)	5%	42
Adult secondary education (grades 9-12) or GED preparation	11%	96
ESL	42%	354
None	16%	140

Note: The percentages in this table do not total 100 because each parent could participate in more than one service.

HOURS OF PARTICIPATION IN ADULT AND PARENTING EDUCATION

Including parents who reported zero hours of participation, the average number of hours of participation in adult education for MEES parents was 42 hours during the 1995-96 program year (Exhibit 4.2). The adult education hours varied widely, ranging from 0 to 522 hours. On average, the MEES parents participated in parenting education for 16 hours during the 1995-96 program year; the range was 0 to 348 hours.

The average participation hours for MEES parents were considerably fewer than the national Even Start averages (93 hours of adult education and 27 hours of parenting education). Again, we need to recognize that *for some parents served by the MEES, all of their participation hours may have occurred during a 3-4 month period.*

Exhibit 4.2: MEES and All Even Start Parents, by Average Hours of Participation in Adult and Parenting Education (1995-96 Participants)

Educational Component	MEES Parents	All Even Start Parents
	Average Hours	**Average Hours**
Adult education	42 hours	93 hours
Parenting education	16 hours	27 hours

Note: The average hours for MEES adult education are based on data received for 601 MEES parents. The average hours for MEES parenting education are based on data received for 814 MEES parents. The average adult education hours for all Even Start parents are based on data received for 32,814 parents. The average parenting education hours for all Even Start parents are based on data received for 33,250 parents.

EXTENT OF MEES CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

Overall, 92 percent of 934 MEES children for whom we received participation information participated in some form of early childhood education (ECE) services sponsored by the MEES. As shown in Exhibit 4.3, the most common ECE services were: individualized, home-based programs (58 percent). The percentage of children receiving home-based services rose from 47 percent in 1994-95 to 58 percent in 1995-96 and was higher than the national average of 42 percent for 1995-96. On the other hand, the percentage of children receiving center-based services declined from 30 percent to 25 percent over the two years. (The percentages in Exhibit 4.3 total more than 100 because projects could report more than one type of program for each child.)

More than 20 percent of the MEES children were enrolled in compulsory education programs covering grades K-3 in which the educational activities were coordinated with the MEES activities. Another 15 percent of the MEES children attended day care programs that included educational components. Finally, approximately 6 percent of children participated in educational activities for school-age children that are not part of their compulsory education curricula.

These services could be provided either directly by MEES projects or their collaborating agencies.

Only 8 percent of the MEES children were reported to have received no ECE services. This is fairly consistent with 5 percent of all Even Start children not participating in any Even Start early childhood education services.

Exhibit 4.3: Percent and Number of MEES Children Participating in Early Childhood Education Programs (1995-96)

Early Childhood Education Program	Percent	Number
Individualized, home-based ECE	58%	543
Organized, center-based ECE	24%	228
Compulsory schooling (K-3) coordinating with MEES	21%	200
Daycare with educational component	15%	142
Services for school-age children outside school hours	6%	59
None	8%	75

The extent of children's participation was assessed by asking how many months they participated in early childhood education programs. Almost 40 percent of the children served by the MEES participated for 1 to 3 months; another 27 percent participated 4 to 6 months (Exhibit 4.4). Thirty-four percent of MEES children participated for more than 6 months, while the comparable percentage was 50 percent for all Even Start children.

Exhibit 4.4: Percent of MEES and All Even Start Children, by Months of Participation in Early Childhood Education (1995-96)

Months of Participation	MEES Children	All Even Start Children
1 - 3 months	39%	29%
4 - 6 months	27%	21%
7 - 9 months	21%	27%
10 - 12 months	13%	23%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Note: The percentages for MEES children are based on data received for 903 children; the percentages for all Even Start children are based on data received for 41,156 children.

The months of participation tended to be more limited for MEES children compared to all Even Start children. This may stem from their parents' migratory employment.

EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN ALL THREE CORE SERVICES

Altogether, 62 percent of families served by MEES in 1995-96 participated in all three core services, compared to 75 percent of all Even Start families. Among MEES families that *did not* participate in all core services, *all* of these families participated in some form of early childhood education; 87 percent participated in parenting education; but only 32 percent participated in adult education.

In situations that make full participation in all core services difficult, MEES families tend to emphasize parenting education and early childhood education more than adult education.

TYPES OF SUPPORT SERVICES RECEIVED BY MEES PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The Even Start basic model stipulates a provision of support services to allow parents and children to benefit fully from the educational opportunities made available through the program. As shown in Exhibit 4.5, the support services most commonly received by MEES parents were child care (47 percent), meals (44 percent), social services (43 percent), transportation (41 percent), and health care (41 percent).

Higher percentages of MEES parents received employment assistance, health care, social services and translation services than all Even Start parents. Yet, 20 percent of the MEES parents did not receive any type of support services, compared to 15 percent of all Even Start parents.

A large percentage of children participating in the MEES program received some sort of support services. About one-half of the children received health care (56 percent), child care (47 percent), meals (47 percent), and transportation (42 percent). Twenty percent of the MEES children received no support services, compared to 22 percent of all Even Start children.

Exhibit 4.5: Percent of Parents and Children in MEES and All Even Start Projects Receiving Support Services (1995-96)

Support Services	Parents		Children	
	MEES	**All Even Start**	**MEES**	**All Even Start**
Child care	47%	52%	47%	48%
Meals	44%	38%	47%	48%
Social services	43%	36%	N/A	N/A
Health care referral, screening	41%	26%	56%	28%
Transportation	41%	43%	42%	43%
Employment assistance	34%	19%	N/A	N/A
Family support	33%	39%	N/A	N/A
Translator, interpreter	30%	15%	23%	11%
Counseling	N/A	N/A	4%	11%
None	20%	15%	20%	22%

Note: "N/A" indicates the types of support services that were assessed only for parents or children, but not both. The percentages for MEES parents and children are based on data reported for 854 parents and 934 children. The percentages for all Even Start parents and children are based on data reported for 34,440 parents and 45,103 children.

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PREVALENCE OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A relatively small percentage of MEES children (10 percent) had special needs. The national Even Start comparison is 12 percent. Among the MEES children identified with special needs, the three most common types of needs were developmental delays (16 percent); speech/language impairment (21 percent); and specific learning disabilities (21 percent).

EXTENT OF RETENTION AND SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS

We examined the patterns of retention in the MEES program through analyses of the following data:

- Whether each family was still participating at the end of the 1995-96 program year;
- If a family had exited the program during the year, the specific reasons for termination; and
- For the families that exited, whether they had completed their educational goals or exited because of problems such as poor attendance, family crises, or lack of interest.

The results of analyses using these measures of retention and termination are presented below.

At the end of the 1995-96 program year, 61 percent of the MEES families were continuing participation (Exhibit 4.6), and 2 percent had left the program having completed their educational goals (Exhibit 4.7). The rate of retention was comparable to the national rate, while the rate of successful completion was slightly lower than the national result (6 percent).

Exhibit 4.6: Percent and Number of MEES Families Continuing Participation at Year End (1995-96)

Year-End Status	Percent	Number
Continuing participation	61%	337
No longer participating	40%	220
Total	**101%**	**557**

Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Given that the primary target of the MEES projects are migrant families, it is not surprising that 14 percent of families terminated due to moving out of the area (Exhibit 4.7), compared to 6 percent for all Even Start families. A higher percentage of MEES families than all Even Start families also left due to new employment.

Seven percent of the MEES families exited due to various reasons such as lack of interest and family problems. This is a lower percentage than the 14 percent of all Even Start families leaving the program due to various problems.

Exhibit 4.7: Percent and Number of MEES Families Participating in 1995-96, by Reason for Termination

Reasons for Termination	Percent	Number
Moved out of the area served by the MEES project	14%	83
Parent(s) found employment that prevents further participation	10%	54
Lack of interest	3%	16
Met planned goals	2%	14
Conflicts or problems prevented continued participation	2%	13
Incomplete participation or poor attendance	1%	7
Family crisis prevents further participation	1%	6
Switched to different program	<1%	1
Other reason	3%	18
Reason unknown	1%	6

PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL STATUS AT YEAR END

As shown in Exhibit 4.8, attaining a GED was not a goal for the majority of MEES parents (52 percent). However, one-third of parents worked toward a diploma or GED, and 3 percent of parents had attained a diploma or GED since participating in the MEES Program.

Compared to MEES parents, 38 percent of all Even Start parents in 1995-96, who did not have a high school diploma or GED at intake, were not working toward a GED. Forty-seven percent did work toward a GED; and 10 percent had attained a GED since enrolling in Even Start.

Exhibit 4.8: Percent and Number of MEES Parents, by Year-end Educational Status (1995-96)

Educational Status	Percent	Number
Received high school diploma, GED, or equivalent prior to Even Start	9%	76
GED is not a current goal for this adult	52%	421
Has been working toward a diploma or GED	33%	269
Has taken the GED tests but has not completed them or passed yet	2%	19
Has attained a diploma or GED since participating in Even Start	3%	23
Has been accepted at a community college, college, or university	<1%	4
Total	**100%**	**812**

Note: Percentages reported in this exhibit are based on 812 parents for whom year-end participation data were reported. Percentages in Exhibit 3.12 are based on 776 parents whose educational background data were collected at the time of their intake.

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PARENTS' EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT YEAR END

Sixty-two percent of parents *participating* in MEES were employed at the end of the year in either a full-time or part-time paying job (Exhibit 4.9). This is nearly double the rate for all Even Start parents participating in 1995-96 (34 percent).

Thirteen percent of MEES parents were unemployed but either looking for work or enrolled in a vocational or educational program. Another 22 percent were unemployed and neither looking for work nor getting more education or training.

Exhibit 4.9: Percent and Number of MEES Parents, by Employment Status at the End of the Year (1995-96)

Employment Status	Percent	Number
Employed in full-time paying job	20%	159
Employed in part-time or seasonal paying job	42%	337
Employed through a job training program	1%	9
Unemployed but enrolled in a vocational or educational program	3%	26
Unemployed but retired or disabled	2%	19
Unemployed and looking for work	10%	80
Unemployed and none of the above apply	22%	179
Total	**100%**	**809**

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